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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

as in cabinets, sofas, etc., and yet whilst there is a certain irregularity, they please owing to right quantitative relation. These relations which have been reduced in music to science also exist in form and color. Architectural features in a piece of furniture are not the less attractive because of a minimised size suggesting rather ornament than utility whether in arches, piers, balustrades and various forms of support as cornices, gargoyles, brackets, or decorated roll mouldings at the intrados of arches. But without any geometrical training the eye and mind instinctively judges and rightly the suitableness of the whole, whether graceful or otherwise, as affecting the sense of propriety and the distinct consciousness of right proportion.

POINTS ABOUT POTTERY.



THE formation of earthen vessels capable of containing fluid substances is an art of the very highest antiquity. At first, the hard shells of gourds and the larger kinds of nuts sufficed; then the skins of animals, to hold liquids; next, hollow bowls of wood; but last, the manufacture of earthen substances, which were able, without being consumed by fire, to cook provisions, boil water, &c.

It is doubtful whether the hardening and fashioning of clay was first practised by the brickmaker or potter. Bricks were burned, we know, and used at Babel, six hundred years prior to the captivity of the Israelites. Many centuries later, the Romans manufactured bricks with great perfection; but though certain that the potter's art was considerable at Rome, no specimens have come down to us. We learn, however, from Vitruvius, who wrote in the Augustan age, that the Romans made their water-pipes of potter's clay, and established potteries in England. Some of these, about a hundred and fifty years ago, were dug up in Hyde Park. They were found to be two inches in thickness, and were firmly jointed together with common mortar mixed with oil. Little figures, covered with a fine deep blue glaze, which were found deposited with Egyptian mummies, cause it to appear that porcelain was made in Egypt in very ancient times.

Vestiges of Roman Pottery are discernible in many parts of England, especially Staffordshire. Governor Pownall relates that in his time (1778) the men employed in fishing at the back of Margate Sands, in the Queen's Channel, frequently drew up in their nets some coarse and rudely formed earthen vessels. It was for some time believed that a Roman trading vessel freighted with pottery had been wrecked here; but on more carefully examining the spot, called by the fishermen Pudding Pan Sand, some Roman bricks were also discovered, cemented together, so as to prove that they had formed part of some building. Further researches showed that in Ptolemy's second book of geography an island was designated as existing in the immediate neighborhood. Such pans as were recovered in a sound state were of coarse material and rude in workmanship—many having neatly impressed upon them the name of *Attilianus*. Fragments of a finer and more fragile description of pottery were likewise brought to the surface; and little doubt remains that during the time of the Roman ascendancy in England a pottery was established upon an island here, which has long disappeared; and that the person whose name has been singularly preserved was engaged in its management.

The Portuguese, who were the means of introducing the fine earthenwares of China into Europe, derive it from the Portuguese *porcelana*, which signifies a *cup*; but some derive it from *porcella*, Latin for a *little pig*, because the glazing, or varnish, and colors of porcelain resemble the shells used in some parts of the East instead of money (cowries), and which, from the similarity of their shape to the back of a little pig, were so called.

It was long believed on the authority of Carden and the elder Scaliger—who, although violently opposed to each other on various and more important subjects, yet agreed in this—that porcelain was made from a mixture of broken egg and sea shells, which were preparatively buried in the earth for nearly a hundred years. The Jesuit, Francis D'Entrecolles, in the eighteenth century, having clandestinely stolen vases from China, they were chemically analysed by Reaumur, and their component parts exactly ascertained. From that period, France rose in the manufacture of its porcelains wonderfully, and the works of Sèvres were taken under royal patronage.

The Porcelain Tower erected at Nankin offers proof sufficient of the very durable nature of their manufacture. The building is of an octagonal shape, of nine stories, and very nearly three hundred feet high, and its entire surface is covered with porcelain of the finest quality. Although this singular and beautiful edifice has been erected more than four hundred and fifty years it has hitherto withstood all the alterations of the seasons, and every variety of weather, without exhibiting the slightest symptoms of deterioration.

"The vaults of the Chinese Palace at Dresden," says Jonas

Hanway, in his account of his travels, published in 1753, "consist of fourteen apartments, filled with Chinese and Dresden porcelain. One would imagine there were sufficient to stock a whole country; and yet they say, with an air of importance, that a hundred thousand pieces more are wanted to complete the furnishing of this single palace. There are a great number of porcelain figures of wolves, bears, leopards, &c., some of them as big as life; a prodigious variety of birds, and a curious collection of different flowers. A clock is preparing for the gallery, whose bells are also to be of porcelain; I heard one of them proved, and think they are sufficient to form any music; but the hammers must be of wood. There are forty-eight large china vases, which appear to be of no use, nor in any way extraordinary, except for their great size; and yet his Polish majesty purchased them of the late king of Prussia at the price of a whole regiment of dragoons."

HOW TO RE-GILD CHAIRS.

IN regilding a chair it must first be washed very carefully with white soap and warm water, rubbing it well, and seeing that all stains are removed. When perfectly dry every part that requires gilding is to receive a coating of Japan gold size put on with a medium sized camel's hair brush. Should any portion to be gilded be left unsized the gold, of course, will not adhere. When the size has become tacky, which will be in two or three minutes, the gold leaf is laid on, but if this is done too early the gold will show a mat surface. Having slightly warmed the gold leaf take a sheet of paper that has been well waxed on one side and pick up a gold leaf with the edge of the waxed surface and lay it flat on the seat, blowing it gently to make it settle down. Continue to lay on the leaves this way, always making them overlap each other at the edges until the seat is covered. Then cut a sheet of gold leaf in small pieces and lay one of these on wherever the gold looks thin, or has broken or does not cover. Next press the gold with a small pad of cotton wool, gently and firmly all over, rubbing away the pieces that do not adhere, and flattening the whole surface. A clean dry camel's hair brush will help to take off gold that has not adhered. Follow out the same process with other parts of the chair. The gilding finished make some clear size by cutting vellum shavings small, putting them in a glazed earthen dish and covering them with water. The dish is then to be covered and set in the oven until the shavings are quite soft. Strain the shavings from the water and leave it to get cold, when it will be in a jellied state. Lap a coat of this upon the chair, and the next day varnish the gilding with white spirit varnish. If parchment for the size cannot be obtained, pieces of white leather will serve the purpose.

THE AMERICAN IDEA.

THE claim is advanced by some very excellent people, and patriotic Americans withal, that our forefathers left the war of the revolution only half fought. It is true that they miscellaneously whipped the red-coats, and drove Mr. Cornwallis and his satraps beyond the sea, thus being enabled to set up in a government business for themselves. But the independence so acquired, and which we celebrate every Fourth of July, was not at all as complete as it might and should have been. The sway of a monarchy was overthrown, but we still crawled along under the yoke of British traditions and prejudices, meekly accepting as our own all their methods and preferences in literature and the arts. Only in later days have men come to perceive that this course was unworthy of America and its destiny. God hath given to us, they say, an inheritance of colossal proportions as well as of magnificent beauty. It has elements and features of greatness all its own, and is vastly more self-sufficing than was ever Egypt or Greece, Rome, France or Britain. Nature exhibits herself here, too, from the daisy to the cyclone, in aspect and in movement, on a scale of loveliness and grandeur that is elsewhere unknown to men. And the race who inherit these splendors, being dowered with ideas of liberty that transcend all former dreams, might reasonably be inspired to create a new literature and arts more in harmony with the conditions prevailing around them. Why not a distinctive American poetry, sculpture, architecture and art types generally, each "racy of the soil," instead of a slavish imitation of and adherence to European standards? This is the question asked and this the crusade being fought by men who have what we call "the American idea"—not as meanly referred to questions of statecraft or economy, but as bearing on the loftier theme of intellectual growth and conquest.

Among the new advocates of these views we hail with much satisfaction our friend Col. J. A. Price, of Scranton, Pa., whose attainments as a scientist—proven in connection with the stove and furnace interests—are now found to be associated with a high discernment in art matters that might not be unworthy of a Ruskin. A very eloquent essay which he has contributed to the *DECORATOR AND FURNISHER* will be everywhere recognized as in championship of this American idea. We would fain reprint here—entire, and in relation to a prevailing controversy—his admirable plea as to the forms of nature herself being the best and truest models in art, but we are constrained to limit our transcript to the remarks which he has made in more immediate connection with heating and stove ornamentation.—*American Artisan*.